

JOHN SHAW.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 657.]

---

JANUARY 10, 1857.

---

Mr. SAPP from the Committee on Military Affairs, made the following

## REPORT.

*The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of John Shaw, respectfully report :*

The memorialist, during the war of 1812, received from Governor Howard, of the Territory of Missouri, an appointment to act as scout or spy upon the movements of the enemy, which consisted of Indians and a portion of the British forces, upon the Mississippi frontier from near above St. Louis, upon both sides of said river, for a distance of 250 miles. The object of this service was to keep the companies of mounted rangers, ordered by the United States government to various points on the said frontier, constantly posted as to the various movements of the hostile Indians. The memorialist was selected for this duty on account of his great skill as a hunter having made him more familiar with the wilds than any other man in that country, and possessed him with powers of endurance which were invaluable for such a service, as also because he was thoroughly acquainted with the Indians, their manners and customs. The discharge of this duty involved great labor, immense risks, and excessive fatigue. It lasted for near three years—from the summer of 1812 to the spring of 1815—during which time the memorialist performed some of the most heroic deeds of daring and extraordinary services that could well be conceived. His life was in constant danger. At times, there being no ferry-boats, he was compelled to swim his horse after his canoe in order that he might ride him across the small streams. At other times he would travel overland to various settlements in Illinois and Missouri, to discover war parties who were constantly committing depredations. Conveying information of their whereabouts to the troops, he would invariably accompany the detachment which went in their pursuit, and take a hand in any engagement which might ensue. At one time he accompanied a squadron as a spy as far up as Rock island. The committee might go into further details of this memorialist's service, but they do not deem it necessary. It is sufficient to say that the

evidence fully establishes that he performed great and eminent services and that he never got paid for them.

The memorialist stands high in Wisconsin, the State of his present residence. Its legislature has passed resolutions memorializing Congress to grant him some relief, which are herewith appended. The history of the State makes honorable mention of him as an early pioneer of its greatness. The Historical Society of the State petition for his relief. In fact, the strongest evidences are afforded not only of the value of his services, but of his great merit as one of the first settlers of the west.

It appears that the memorialist never was paid a cent for his services as a scout and spy, or for any of the extraordinary duties which he performed, and which were the subject of special appointment. Besides this, he makes oath that he spent out of his own pocket \$1,700 for horses, arms, ammunition, &c., not one cent of which was ever reimbursed him. He relied upon the governor of Missouri who appointed him, to obtain him such a consideration as what he had done was worth; for the governor had promised him that when he could acquaint the department at Washington with the facts, and the estimate which he placed upon the memorialist's service, the government would immediately compensate him. But unfortunately the governor died before he could fulfil his promise, and the memorialist has to this day remained unpaid. Concluding what he had engaged to do under appointment of the governor of the Territory of Missouri, he pursued his life as a pioneer and hunter in the wilds of the west. Becoming at one time well off, from the advantages which presented themselves in the opening up to settlement of the country of which he was so early a settler, no necessity pressed him to urge his claim against the government. Now he is poor, old, and blind, and prays that what has been so long due him may be given him to smoothe his path to the grave. The committee think that the governor of the Territory, being an agent for the general government, had it within his discretion to employ the necessary services of such a man as the memorialist, and that the United States should pay him a reasonable consideration for the same. A bill is accordingly reported.

---

MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS IN BEHALF OF THE CLAIMS OF COLONEL JOHN SHAW,  
OF MARQUETTE COUNTY, WISCONSIN.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled :*

The memorial of the legislature of the State of Wisconsin respectfully represents : That your memorialists have learned that their venerable fellow-citizen, Colonel John Shaw, has made application to Congress for pay for three years' services, during the entire war of 1812-'15, on the frontiers of Missouri and Illinois, as a spy or scout, say from the outbreak of the Indians in that region in the spring of 1812, till the news of peace reached the northwestern frontiers in the

spring of 1815, and also a claim of \$13,684 93 for losses sustained to that amount during said war, in consequence of furnishing the Missouri and Illinois Rangers with various kinds of supplies necessary for mounted rangers; that said rangers not getting their pay till after they were disbanded and scattered to their several homes and elsewhere, Colonel Shaw failed to receive his just dues from them to the amount above mentioned; that said losses sustained by his patriotic efforts to serve his country in her day of need plunged him into embarrassments from which it required several years to extricate himself. Your memorialists further represent that Colonel Shaw bears among his fellow-citizens a high and unblemished character for worth, integrity, and enterprise, and none who know him doubt his statements as to his services, or the losses he represents himself to have sustained; and now in his declining years, having nearly attained the age of seventy-four, and so nearly blind as to be incapacitated for any manual labor, he really needs all that is justly due from his country. A statement of his services may be found in the *Second Annual Report and Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, which statement, your memorialists are satisfactorily informed, has been thoroughly tested by the officers of that society, and found to be worthy of the fullest confidence and belief. Your memorialists therefore respectfully ask your honorable body to give to the claims of Colonel John Shaw that careful attention and examination which they are well persuaded they justly deserve.

JOSHUA STARK,

*Speaker pro tempore of the Assembly.*

B. G. GILL,

*President pro tempore of the Senate.*

Approved October 4, 1856.

STATE OF WISCONSIN, }  
*Secretary's office.* } ss.

The secretary of state of the State of Wisconsin does hereby certify that the foregoing act has been compared with the original enrolled act deposited in this office, and that the same is a true and correct copy thereof and of the whole of such original.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the great seal of the State, at the Capitol, in Madison, this 7th day of October, 1856.

JOHN W. HUNT,

*Assistant Secretary of State.*

*Resolved*, By the senate, (the assembly concurring,) that the governor be requested to forward copies of the memorial to our senators and representatives in Congress, in relation to the claims of Colonel John Shaw, who are hereby solicited to use their best endeavors to obtain from Congress favorable action on said memorial.

Attest:

BYRON PAYNE,

*Chief Clerk of Senate.*

